

Enjoying the countryside

Hampshire boasts an extremely rich and diverse countryside and an extensive network of public paths which provide a range of opportunities for enjoying the great outdoors. Rights of way are linear routes, often ancient trackways through deep countryside; there are over 3,000 miles of these in Hampshire. The map in this leaflet may also show access to other areas of land, such as commons, woodland, recreation grounds or conservation areas, and your Town Council may know of guided walks or events. Many people can reach the countryside within a few hundred yards of home and the plants, trees and views along the same paths often change dramatically through the seasons. We hope that this leaflet will encourage you to explore and enjoy your local countryside.



Using local paths

Many rights of way cross private land and we ask you to bear this in mind by keeping to the path and being responsible when using them. There are four types, please check which paths you are entitled to use (for example, cyclists cannot use footpaths). Wheelchairs, pushchairs and dogs are allowed on all types of right of way. Any permissive paths or areas marked are not rights of way, but the landowner has given permission for the public to use them.

To ensure that the countryside is protected for future generations be sure to:

- Be safe – wear suitable clothing and shoes and take care when crossing roads
- Plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them and take your litter home
- Protect plants and animals
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

Maintaining rights of way

Hampshire County Council:

- Ensures that rights of way are not obstructed
- Maintains the surface in a fit condition for its intended use
- Maintains some bridges
- Signposts and waymarks paths
- Authorises stiles and gates
- Keeps the definitive map up-to-date

Landowners:

- Keep back side growth and overhanging vegetation
- Reinstate paths across fields after ploughing or planting crops
- Maintain most stiles and gates
- Should not obstruct paths or deter use of them
- Should not plough paths at field edges
- Should not keep dangerous animals (including certain bulls) on paths

A brief history of the walks around Alton

Along the Holybourne walk you will encounter a number of timber framed houses dating from the 17th Century. At this time the "Alton Machine" stage coach drawn by six horses may have passed en route for London or Southampton. Neatham is included in the Domesday Book and appears to have been more important than Alton, having its own market. Prior to this there was the Roman settlement, Vindomis, and earlier still evidence of a Middle Palaeolithic site (50,000 BC).

The Flood Meadows walk takes you alongside the River Wey watercress beds. There is evidence of Saxon and Roman settlements here. Indeed one derivation of the name "Alton" comes from the Saxon ea-wal-ton "the place of the beautiful springs". It was in Flood Meadows that the brutal murder of a young girl, Sweet Fanny Adams, took place in 1867 and her well tended grave is in the old cemetery. Further along you will see the valley in which the Parliamentarian forces surprised and defeated the defending Royalist army in 1643 when they stormed St Lawrence Church.

The walk around Windmill Hill gives extensive views of the surrounding countryside, much of which would have been covered with forest where Kings would have hunted wild boar, wolves and deer. The railway line was laid in 1865 connecting Alton to Winchester, extended later to Gosport, Basingstoke and the London Line. The water works were constructed in 1876 with a 547 ft well.

Useful Contacts

Alton Town Council, (and further copies of this leaflet)
Town Hall, Market Square,
Alton GU34 1HD **01420 83986**

www.alton.gov.uk

Public Transport

Traveline **0871 200 22 33**
(code 83)
Stagecoach **0871 200 22 33**

Countryside Information

Alton Tourist Information Centre **01420 88448**
Hampshire County Council Information Centre **0845 603 5636**

For further information on access to the countryside please contact Hampshire County Council on the above number or visit www.hants.gov.uk/countryside

This leaflet was produced with the assistance of the Alton's Parish Path Footpath Wardens

Walking in Hampshire www.hants.gov.uk/walking
Cycling in Hampshire: www.hants.gov.uk/cycling
Rights of Way Maps on-line: www.hants.gov.uk/row

OS Explorer map no 144 covers this area

Cover painting by Pam Pell
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Disclaimer: Published by Alton Town Council and Hampshire County Council, through the Small Grants Scheme. The routes described have been put forward by the Town Council. Whilst the County Council endeavours to maintain all rights of way to a high standard, additional resources are not allocated to routes promoted in this leaflet. Whilst every care has been taken in the preparation of this leaflet, Hampshire County Council is unable to accept any responsibility for accident or loss resulting from the information within this leaflet.



Hampshire
County Council



Alton Town Council

Exploring Alton



Three circular walks



Windmill Hill Walk

Windmill Hill Walk

(Allow 1 1/4 hours)

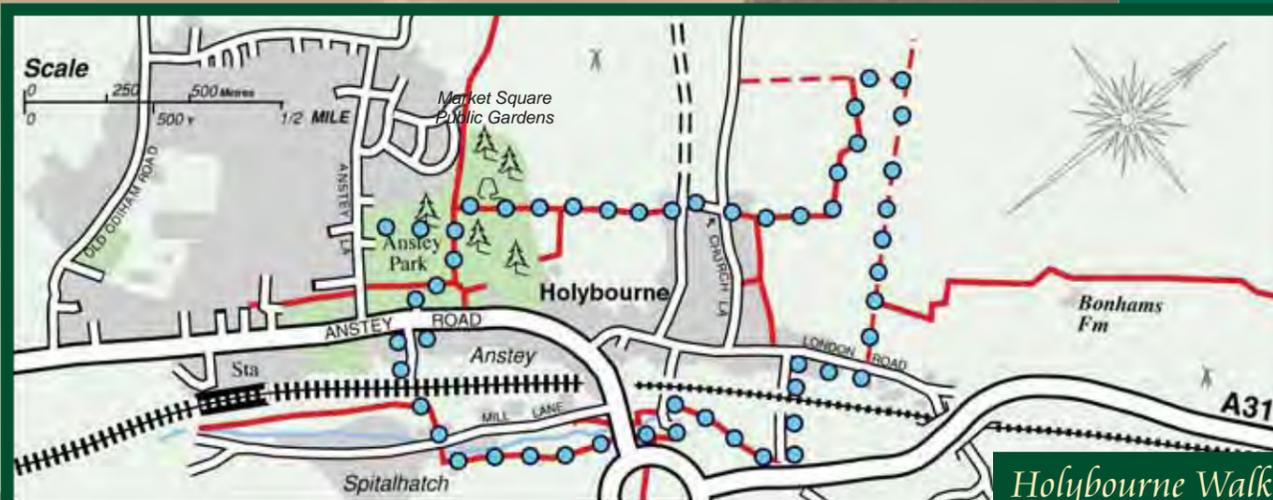
A delightful, undulating walk, with fine views to the South. Some long grass but rarely muddy.

Start from the lay-by at the beginning of Salisbury Close. Take the tarmac path uphill and through kissing gate at top. Immediately leave the field corner through lift-stile on left. Go along the edge of copse, through the remains of a kissing gate, and straight ahead, joining a tarmac drive. At the end turn right across two entrances and through a gate/stile to footpath along right hand edge of field with views to South. When hedge diverges to the right carry straight on down field to kissing gate ahead at hedge corner. Go through and down steps, then bear right, along hedge to the end. Follow hedge right and uphill to the corner. (Ignore path on through kissing gate) turn left again along contour above lavender field. Turn right again when you reach the end and go steeply uphill to the corner and a three way finger post. (See Short-cut 1) Turn left, gently downhill along hedge, then straight on across field to finger post at metalled road (Borovere Lane). Follow lane, passing converted farm buildings on right. As lane bears left take narrow, sign-posted footpath straight on between hedges. In a few yards, at the junction with the corner of the tarmac path, turn right, keeping the houses on your left. Follow on along tarmac path, curving left around the houses, and on down past green space to the road (Ridgeway). (See Short-cut 2) Take care crossing the road into

Kempton Close and after 60 yards take first tarmac path to the right just as the road bears left. Go down the path and straight across Goodwood Close into the inconspicuous tarmac footpath ahead (between Nos 14 and 15). Follow the footpath, which becomes gravel, to end. Turn right up road (Mount Pleasant) and continue past New Barn Lane, to end. At three way finger post take path straight on through trees, with vehicle-barriers at each end, to road. Ignore footpath you can see on far side but turn left along road (Ridgeway). Your starting point in Salisbury Close is the next turn after Wincanton Close.

Short-cut 1. Straight on, under trees, to road (Ridgeway). Turn right and then right again into Salisbury Close.

Short-cut 2. Turn right, straight along road (Ridgeway) and right again into Salisbury Close.



Holybourne Walk

Holybourne Walk

(3.5 miles. Allow 2 hours)

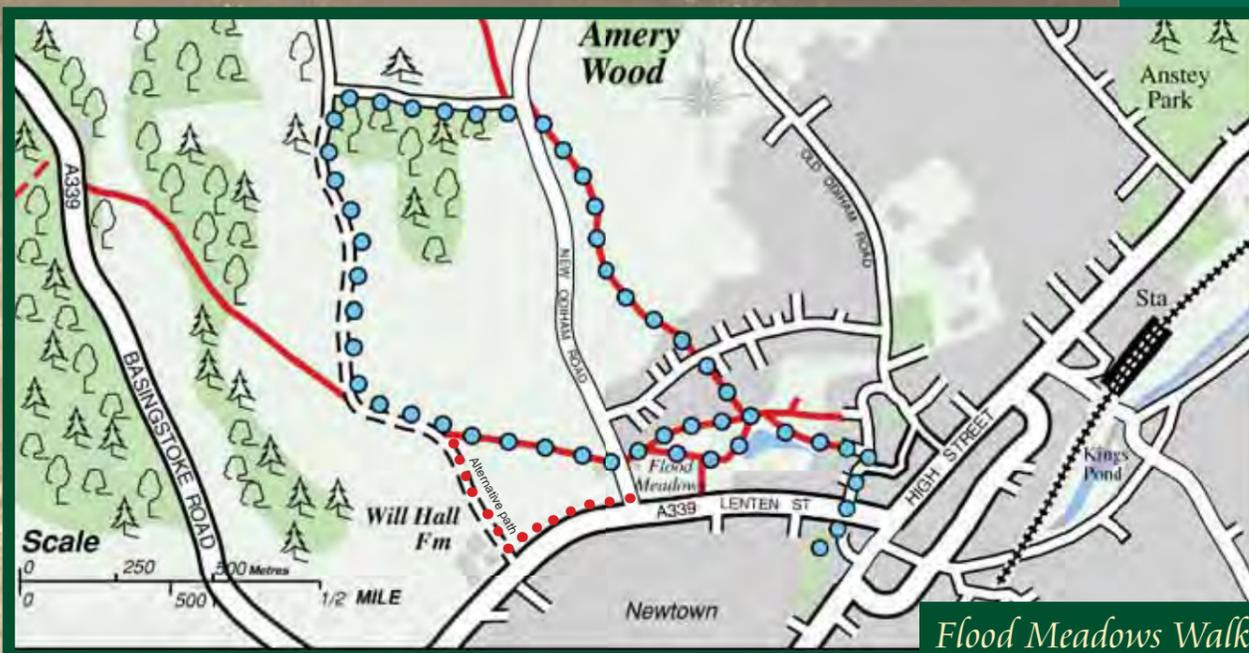
Start at the Pavilion changing rooms in Anstey Park and cross playing fields between rugby pitches keeping Anstey Road to the right. At hedge turn to the left along the hedge until reaching a gap. Go through this gap and turn left. On reaching the corner of the fenced school playing field turn right and continue along path until reaching a road (Howards Lane). Turn left and follow the road as it bends right passing a church (Norman nave and tower and 13th C. Chancel). At end of lane cross Church Lane and take fenced track ahead. Proceed until you reach a gap in a hedge at the end of the first field. Instead of continuing along wide track ahead, turn left (slightly uphill) keeping to the eastern edge of this same field and then through a hedge into another field and turn left. Continue uphill with the hedge on your left (note the lovely landscape on your right); over the rise and downhill until you reach a bridleway.

Turn right and follow this sunken path down to the next junction and turn right towards the main road. At the junction with the main road (observe the sign indicating the Cuckoo's Corner Roman Site) opposite Vindomis Close, turn right and follow the main road towards Holybourne with a children's play area on the right. Continue on past Holybourne Forge, 18th C. Which is now obscured by a tall hedge.

Turn left into Lower Neatham Mill Lane and downhill until you nearly reach the Alton bypass. Turn right just before the bypass through kissing gate by a metal gate and cross the field on gravel track keeping to the right, past a small brick pumping house to another kissing gate. Cross the wooden bridge over the River Wey and continue with the river on your left towards a row of brick houses. On reaching Upper Neatham Mill Lane turn left. After about 40 metres go through a gate and passing Upper Neatham Mill Farm on your right, turn right at the Old Forge (timber clad building). Continue along grass path under concrete bridge, bear left up steep path, (BEWARE: steep drop to river) keeping the river to your right. Descend to tarmac road and turn right along estate road to Mill Lane. Take care crossing Mill Lane and go through concrete bollards into lower end of Anstey Mill Lane. Note the ruins of Anstey Mill 19th C., which still retains its cast iron water wheel. Continue across the estate road with Malby's on your right and again through bollards into the continuation of Anstey Mill Lane passing under railway bridge to reach Anstey Road. Take care crossing road and return to your departure point in Anstey Park.



Holy Rood Church



Flood Meadows Walk

Flood Meadows Walk

(Approx 3 miles. Allow 1 to 1 1/2 hours to include variations)

Market Square with the historic Town Hall is the ideal place to begin a varied walk with fine views of Alton and the countryside.

Amery Street is opposite leading to "Cut Pound" and the River Wey, then left into Tanhouse Lane and Flood Meadows; pause to note the information boards. Follow the left path adjacent to the old watercress beds. At the path "cross-roads" continue on the incline for 25 metres, take the right fork alongside a brick wall and into Wentworth Gardens which joins Greenfields Avenue, (opposite is a bus shelter). Walk straight ahead up a broad and rising tarmac path to a children's playground. Continue on the grass path with hedge on the left. The adjacent fields on the right belong to the Town Council and afford views of the town.

Go through a kissing gate; continue on the downward slope to Greenmount Farm and two wooden gates at the edge of New Odiham Road. Beware of fast traffic, coming around a bend. Continue up Southwood Road; note that this is a steep climb for 500 metres to a sign post. Turn left and follow Brick

Kiln Lane back with the barn on the right. Enjoy the splendid views of Alton and the open country. The hedge lined Lane gently descends and becomes tarmaced. Walk a further 200 metres turn left, up some steps through a gap in the hedge. The path follows diagonally across two fields to New Odiham Road. (An alternative is to continue down the Lane turn left into Basingstoke Road, then left into New Odiham Road which you need to cross for both routes.) Take the narrow path between numbers 16 and 18 into Flood Meadows. Follow the tarmac path, houses on the left; turn right down hill over grass towards a bridge over the River Wey. The path alongside the Wey goes to Tanhouse Lane.

Enjoy the choice of refreshments in one of Alton's many excellent cafes and public houses, or relax in the delightful Public Gardens.